



Estate Agents Urge Don't Wait Until Spring

Despite reports of the housing market rapidly cooling in the run up to Christmas, over 80% of estate agents are recommending that sellers should still put their property on the market by the beginning of January and not wait until the Spring, according to a new survey released today by the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA).

Winter sales

The poll asked estate agents across the country when they would recommend a seller should place their house on the market over the winter and also asked for the agents' top tips to help sell a home during this time. Just under a third (29.1%) of the agents polled recommended early December would be a good time to put a home up for sale with 48.7% suggesting January. Only 16.2% said that sellers should wait until the Spring – traditionally a busy time in the housing market.

How to boost a home's appeal

In addition, the survey also asked for agents' opinions on how to boost a home's appeal. Top of the list with 76.5% was decluttering the interior as this is an inexpensive way to dramatically increase the perception of space. This was closely followed by a thorough spring clean.

A tidy garden is seen as a priority by 47.8% of estate agents and during the winter this is often overlooked by sellers. Clear away the autumn leaves and try to make the most of the bare branches and flowerbeds by weeding thoroughly and making sure the lawn is neat. Keep rubbish bins and unused summer patio furniture stored out of sight. The exterior paintwork should also be fresh including the gutters, windowsills, doors and fences.

Neutral interior decoration is rated by 40% of agents as a good way to boost the home's saleability. Outrageous colour schemes do not appeal to a wide number of people and this goes for tacky Christmas decorations as well as carpets, wallpaper and paintwork.

Almost a quarter (24.4%) of the estate agents polled felt that a new kitchen or bathroom would add to a home's appeal, so getting in the builders could be a worthwhile and a rewarding new year's resolution. However don't bother to put fancy gadget technology on your Christmas list – these were rated by less than 1% of those polled.

Peter Bolton King, Chief Executive of the NAEA, comments: "We have been seeing a lot of media reports recently that the housing market is stalling. However, although we are seeing a slight slowdown, we anticipate that this will be short-lived. Many potential buyers are acting cautiously at the moment but they are still looking for good quality, realistically priced properties, especially if sellers are willing to make changes to their properties to suit the widest market. It's often worthwhile getting a second opinion regarding the overall impression of your home as it is difficult to be objective."

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